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## Education Committee

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### HB 1669

**Brief Description:** Regarding the educational opportunity gap.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Santos, Parker, Dammeier, McCoy, Kenney, Hasegawa, Moscoso and Maxwell.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- References to the "achievement gap" throughout the school code and in the chapter regarding the Department of Early Learning are changed to "educational opportunity gap".
- The name of the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee is changed to the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee.

**Hearing Date:** 2/11/11

**Staff:** Cece Clynch (786-7195).

#### Background:

The 2008 Legislature commissioned five studies to analyze the differences in academic achievement and educational outcomes among various subgroups of students. These differences were referred to as the achievement gap. The commissioned studies drew from research, best practices, and personal, professional, and cultural experiences to come up with various recommendations to close the achievement gap.

In 2009 the Legislature created the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (Committee) to synthesize findings and recommendations from the 2008 studies into an implementation plan, and recommend policies and strategies to close the achievement gap. The Committee is comprised of six legislators, a representative of federally recognized tribes in Washington to be designated by the tribes, and four members appointed by the Governor in consultation with the state ethnic commissions and representing the African American

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community, the Latino community, the Asian American community, and the Pacific Islander community. The Governor and the tribes were encouraged to designate members with school experience. Staff support for the Committee is provided by the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning.

According to the January 2010 report by the Committee:

*The "achievement gap" classically refers to the difference in test scores between racial and ethnic students and their white counterparts. This terminology is deeply embedded in the nation's vocabulary, including our own enabling legislation and our committee's name - Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee. However, our work makes us increasingly wary of the term the "achievement gap" for two reasons. First, the plural form - "achievement gaps" - more correctly denotes the unique and complex challenges faced by our various ethnic and racial subgroups.*

*Second, and more importantly, we are increasingly convinced that the gap arises from inequities in the education system. All students can succeed, but they need highly effective teachers, exemplary curriculum and materials, and appropriate academic and social support - resources that are often missing today for students of color. These "opportunity gaps" or "access gaps" make student success difficult or impossible. Part of the work of the Committee is to remedy this situation and develop a statewide plan to provide equitable opportunities for ALL students.*

**Summary of Bill:**

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The name of the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee is changed to the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.